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Connally's Wounds Held No Secrets

By David W. Belin

WHILE the family of John B. Connally, the former Texas governor, buried him, conspiracy theorists advanced specious claims that tiny bullet fragments in his right wrist would prove there was a second gun — thus a second assassin — in the slaying of President John F. Kennedy.

In Mr. Connally's wrist were fragments of the bullet that had first passed through Kennedy's neck and then had entered Mr. Connally's back, exited his chest, passed through his right wrist and stopped in his left thigh, when Kennedy was slain in Dallas on Nov. 22, 1963.

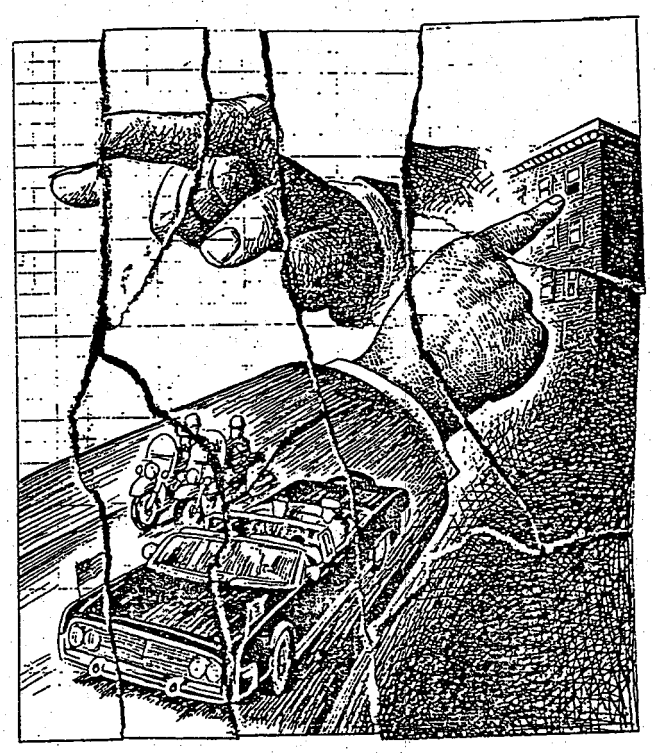
The assassination sensationalists argued that these fragments, each of which weighs less than a postage stamp, would determine whether Mr. Connally had been struck by more than one bullet and whether the nearly whole bullet that rolled off his stretcher in Parkland Hospital had caused all his wounds.

The Connally family declined to permit tampering with the Governor's body with good reason.

All the physicians who treated Mr. Connally for his wound agreed that he had been struck by just one bullet, fired from behind.

Tiny fragments of that bullet had been removed from his wrist in 1963 and, in 1978, had been subjected to neutron activation analysis by an expert in the field, Dr. Vincent P. Guinn, who had been retained by the House Select Committee on Assassinations. He determined that the fragments removed from Mr. Connally came from the bullet found in the hospital, which was ballistically proved to have come from Lee Harvey Oswald's rifle.

David W. Belin, a lawyer, was counsel to the Warren Commission.



Christophe Vorlet

The Warren Commission and House committee unanimously concluded that all the shots that struck Kennedy and wounded Mr. Connally were fired from behind by Oswald. Two bullets struck Kennedy, one smashing his skull and killing him.

Since Mr. Connally's death, the person dominating the TV screen on the bullet issue has been Dr. Cyril Wecht, one of the most vocal critics of the Warren Commission report. His allegations that Kennedy was struc from the front by a dum-dum bull that vanished have been disprove repeatedly by independent experts.

Four panels totaling 20 doctor have examined the Kennedy autops photographs and X-rays. Ninetee unequivocally concluded that all th shots that struck Kennedy and M Connally had been fired from behinc

Dr. Wecht, the sole dissenter, wa the only one among the 20 doctor retained as a medical consultant, fc a fee of thousands of dollars, by th producers of the cynically misleadin movie "JFK." He was the only one c the 20 to appear in the five-hou A & E TV network series, "The Me Who Killed Kennedy," a gross mis representation of the overall record

Last year, when I talked on th phone with Mr. Connally abou "JFK" and the A & E series, we dis cussed the bullet that had injure him. He had raised questions abou the single-bullet theory, he said, be cause he was certain he was hit b the second, not the first, shot.

The single-bullet theory is solid.

I said that the commission an House committee had determined tha one of the three shots Oswald fired hac missed, and that the committee hac concluded that it was the first one tha had missed. There was, I said, nothing inconsistent between Mr. Connally's belief that the second shot had struck him and the findings of the commission and committee that the bullet that passed through Kennedy's neck had hit him. This was confirmed by the fact that the exit speed of the bullet from Kennedy's neck was nearly 1,800 feet per second. If it had not struck Mr. Connally, it would have struck inside the Presidential limousine, causing great damage. No such damage occurred.

If Mr. Connally did not believe that Oswald was the sole gunman, he would have moved heaven and earth to find any other culprit.

About 2 percent of the Warren Commission files have not been made public. Most of the C.I.A. files have also been withheld. I have had access to all these files. I said in 1975 that the files should be released. I still think so. Full disclosure would confirm the commission's findings that Oswald was the lone gunman. □